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CITY MANAGER



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August 19, 2015

NEWS RELEASE

Department of Public Health Confirms Several New West Nile Virus Cases

Residents urged to practice the "four Ds" to avoid mosquito bites

EL PASO, Texas – Recent rains and high temperatures are believed to be factors in a recent jump in the number of West Nile virus (WNV) cases being reported locally. This week the Department of Public Health confirmed an additional six cases of the mosquito-borne disease in the area. This brings the total number of cases to seven so far this year. The new cases involve an elderly man, an elderly woman, and a middle aged man who all live in the Mission Valley. The list also includes an elderly man who lives in east El Paso, a young man who resides in the central part of town, and a middle aged man who lives in the Upper Valley. Back in June the Department recorded its first local WNV case this year in an elderly man who resides in the south central part of town.

"Our epidemiology team continues to work hard to identify cases of West Nile in our community," said Fernando Gonzalez, Lead Epidemiologist. "We hope that sharing this information with the public will help raise awareness of the importance of mosquito prevention, and that people will do everything they can to avoid getting bitten."

The best way to avoid exposure to mosquito-borne diseases is to practice the "four Ds":

DEET - Use insect repellents when you go outdoors. Repellents containing DEET, picaridin, IR3535, and some oil of lemon eucalyptus and para-menthane-diol products provide longer-lasting protection.

DRESS - When weather permits, wear long sleeves, long pants, and socks when outdoors. Mosquitoes may bite through thin clothing, so spraying clothes with repellent containing permethrin or another EPA-registered repellent will give extra protection. Don't apply repellents containing permethrin directly to skin. Rather, spray permethrin-containing products only on clothing.

DUSK and DAWN - Take extra care during peak mosquito biting hours. Take extra care to use repellent and protective clothing from dusk to dawn or consider avoiding outdoor activities during these times.

DRAIN - Help reduce the number of mosquitoes around and outside your home by emptying standing water from flowerpots, gutters, buckets, pool covers, pet water dishes, discarded tires, and birdbaths on a regular basis.

You can also mosquito-proof your home by installing or repairing screens on windows and doors to keep mosquitoes out. The City's Vector Control Program is also continuing its proactive fogging and treatment of

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Promote Transparent and Consistent Communication Among All Members of the Community

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areas of concern. They actively monitor reservoirs, drains, inactive pools, and investigate citizen's complaints of potential mosquito infestations. The best way to report any mosquito related concerns is to call *3-1-1*.

Education

In effort to increase awareness about the disease and ways the public can protect themselves, the Department of Public Health has added a West Nile virus session to the list of presentations offered by the Speakers Bureau. Local civic and community organizations can schedule a presentation by visiting www.EPHealth.com and clicking on "Special Projects."

The efforts and services offered by the Department of Public Health support the City of El Paso's strategic goal to nurture and promote a healthy, sustainable community. For more information on the programs and services offered by the Department of Public Health, please visit www.EPHealth.com or dial *2-1-1*.

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